

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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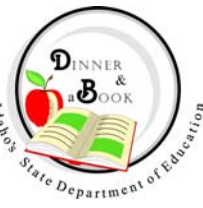
READY TO LEARN

Books for Valentine's

By Dr. Stan Steiner

February is a great month to reflect on what makes a friendship and valentines provide an opportunity for kids to practice meaningful writing.

"Queen of Hearts," by Mary Englebreit, 2005, HarperCollins. A perfect story to read for Valentine's Day. Ann Estelle worked so hard making her valentine's box perfect that she forgot to make valentines. Her special attention to her box proved to be the perfect solution to her dilemma.



"Corduroy's Valentine's Day," by Don Freeman, 2004, Viking. Corduroy, one of the best-loved storybook characters, prepares for Valentine's Day.

"Valentine's Hearts: Holiday Poetry," by Lee Bennett Hopkins, 2005, HarperCollins. This is a cute collection of Valentine Day poetry selected by Hopkins for emerging readers.

"Be My Valentine," by Salina Yoon, 2004, Price Stern Sloan. Pre K. This is a unique heart-shaped board book with three interactive valentines to surprise your audience.

"Skin Again," by Bell Hooks, 2004, Hyperion. A perfect book for explaining the basics of a true friendship. If you really want to get to know a person you have to look inside.

Dr. Stan Steiner, is the chairman of the Boise State University's Department of Literacy. He can be reached at (208) 426-3962 or via email at ssteine@boisestate.edu.

Help children learn about emotions

Dear Reader:

February brings with it a crop of pink and red hearts everywhere from the grocery stores to our mailboxes to celebrate the Valentine's holiday.

This is a fun time for young children as they scribble, paste, and compose Valentine creations.

This time also provides an opportunity to talk about emotions with our children. Along with letters, numbers, and shapes, it is important for young children to recognize and identify their emotions.

Parents and care givers can help children acquire these skills and knowledge in several ways.

First is learning the names of some emotions i.e. happy, love, sad, mad, etc. It is important for adults to help children recognize and identify what they are feeling.



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public
Instruction

Our Idaho Early Learning Standards (<http://www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/content/early.asp>) include some

activities that can help parents and care givers including:

- * Read books that discuss feelings and emotions (e.g., "I Was So Mad" by Mercer Mayer).

- * Discuss and identify feelings and emotions during dramatic and role-playing activities or pretend play.

- * Label feelings and emotions during free play and dramatic and role play situations, with assistance.

- * Help the child label the feelings he or she experiences during their everyday activities.

- * Adults also can describe the feelings they experience.

Understanding our emotions is an important skill that begins in our earliest years.

READY TO LEARN

Read Across America event set for March 2

From coast to coast, readers all over the country are revving up for the national kick-off of America's largest reading event.

Attracting some of the biggest celebrities in entertainment and sports, the Read Across America program, sponsored by the 2.7-million-member National Education Association (NEA) and Dr. Seuss Enterprises along with 45 national partner organizations, knows reading is "Where it's Hat" and expects millions of Americans, young and old, to open a book and celebrate reading on March 2, NEA's Read Across America Day.

NEA's Read Across America, a year-long program designed to get kids excited about reading, culminates every year on Dr. Theodore "Ted" Seuss's



birthday on March 2.

The NEA's Read Across America Team is led by two co-

captains, National Football League (NFL) superstars Tiki Barber, a running back of the New York Giants, and his twin brother, Ronde Barber, starting cornerback of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, last year's National Football Conference champions.

Reading with kids is not something new for the Barber twins. Long before they became record-breaking NFL stars, Tiki and Ronde partnered up with Scholastic Book Clubs to pilot the "It Should Be Me" Writing Contest, designed to motivate students to read and write. In August 2004,

Tiki and Ronde published "By My Brother's Side," (Simon & Schuster), a children's book illustrating their values of hard work and the importance of never giving up.

The NEA offers the following tips for parents to promote reading with their children:

- Set a good example as a reader - let kids see you reading every day.

- Get a subscription in his or her name to an age-appropriate magazine for your child.

- Make reading fun - a time that you and your children look forward to spending together.

- Keep lots of books, magazines, and newspapers around the house.



RESOURCES

Mini-grants available for accreditation

Accreditation mini-grants are available to child care or preschool facilities that are either in the process of applying for accreditation or are working to maintain their accreditation status.

Who can apply: Child care facilities or preschool programs that are in the process of applying for accreditation or who are working to maintain their accreditation status may apply. This includes child care centers, group child care facilities, home child care facilities, and preschool programs. All staff members must be registered in the IdahoSTARS professional development registry.

Grant amounts: The accreditation mini-grant will award up to \$1,000 to successful applicants.

Deadline: All applications must be received in the IdahoSTARS Moscow Administrative Office, located at the University of Idaho's Center on Disability and Human Development by 5 p.m. PST on the closing date of March 1, 2005. All applicants will be notified no later than April 15 of the status of their application.

Grant uses: The monetary award may be used for paying fees associated with the accreditation process or to purchase equipment and/or make facility renovations to meet the accreditation standards.

Reporting: Successful applicants will receive a reporting form with their monetary award. Reporting is required for all recipients of the IdahoSTARS accreditation mini-grant.

For more information contact: Janice Guier, IdahoSTARS Coordinator by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588. jguier@uidaho.edu or visit <http://idahostars.org/>

NUTRITION

Make mealtimes pleasant experiences

Young children benefit when mealtimes are happy.

Some things that parents and child-care providers can do to encourage young children to eat healthy meals is to provide a pleasant mealtime atmosphere, set regular times for meals and snacks, plan and prepare healthy meals and snacks, and assure that children come to the table at meal



and snack times.

A happy mealtime atmosphere includes conversation that focuses on the child's interests and experiences.

Giving children enough time to eat his or her meal or snack without feeling rushed to finish is another way to make mealtime enjoyable.

Setting regular times for meals and snacks encourages children to eat at mealtime and prevents young children from getting too hungry between meals.

By carefully planning

and preparing meals and snacks, parents and childcare providers can offer children wholesome foods and "easy-to-like-foods."

A transition time between active play activities and mealtime will encourage children to slow down and focus on the meal or the snack.

This can be something as small as saying, "Let's wash our hands and then we will sit down at the table together."

Whatever the setting, mealtime should be a happy time for young children.

READY TO LEARN

Learning to take turns builds respect

Taking turns, following rules, sharing, and cooperating are important social skills for young children to learn if they are to respect others. Parents can help teach their children how to take turns in a variety of ways.

Birth to 1 year – Learning respect begins with how children are treated by the adults in their lives. Parents should respond to baby cries by soothing, feeding, or playing. You model respect by listening to and answering your baby's attempts to talk.

1 to 3 years – You can start working on the concept of taking turns by identifying ways that you

take turns. For example, when loading up your car, describe what happens. You can say "First we put you in your car seat, then it's my turn to get into the car." At intersections or traffic lights, identify when it is your turn to go.

3 to 5 years – You can play some simple games that require taking turns. Try playing "I Spy" in the grocery store. The parent can begin by saying "I spy something square." (Hint: Find items on your grocery list.) Once the object is identified, say "Now it's your turn, what do you spy?" Parents and children can practice taking turns and conversation skills.

ARTS

Activity promotes fine motor skills

By Jennifer Williams
2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

February is a great month for promoting the development of fine motor skills.

Valentines are universal in their appeal to preschool children and can be beautiful decorations.

Begin by folding a small towel and place on a table as a cushion. Place a piece of black construction paper on top of the towel. On another piece of paper draw one or two large hearts with a dark marker. Be careful that you leave as much border around the hearts as possible, at least 2 inches all the way around.

Give the child a lesson in handling a toothpick safely and show him how to poke holes along the heart pattern and through the black paper. It may be a good idea to draw dots a quarter to a half inch apart on the heart pattern.

When all the holes have been poked through the paper and completely around the heart, find a window with lots of sunshine and see how the light comes through the holes.

To further promote the development of fine motor skills, draw wavy, parallel lines on a piece of construction paper with a dark marker. Draw two or three lines per sheet of paper and place funny and colorful valentine stickers at one end of the lines. Have the child cut the line to the sticker. Eventually a closed shape can be attempted.

Use the cut pieces of paper and extra stickers to finish decorating the window where the toothpick valentines are taped.

At night you can turn all the lights off and have your child shine a flashlight through the pattern.